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After the Social Movements in 2019: Examining the Association between Online Civic Participation of Hong Kong's Young People and their Real-life Civic Participation

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Abstract

This paper investigates the relationship between online civic participation and their real-life civic participation among Hong Kong young people. Online participation and social media were found to be conducive for possibilities of civic engagement among young people. Hong Kong saw several big social movements in recent years, and the wide participation of young people has caught worldwide attention. There are speculations that online civic participation has led to their real-life participation. Attempting to explore this question, this study utilized a validated questionnaire to investigate the relationship between online and offline civic participation among 1,057 Hong Kong young people in 2020, when the mass participation in the anti-extradition bill was just over. The result found that internet political activism and online critical perspective have a possible statistically significant effect on young people's interest in politics, interest for social and civic participation, off-line citizenship self-efficacy, and active participation for social change. Generally speaking, this study confirmed online civic participation has an effect on offline civic participation, though young people tend to engage themselves online rather real-life participation. Our findings also support the correlation between youth's offline and online civic participation. Other emergent social and education questions such as digital citizenship education can be followed suit.

Keywords: *Online civic participation, real-life civic participation, digital citizenship education, Hong Kong young people*

Introduction

The increasing use of online social media among youths enhances their citizenship engagement, knowledge, and participation (Davies, et al., 2014), but there have been questions of whether using online social media can enhance computer literacy and their participation (Appel, 2012), not to mention that domains of time spent, activity, investment and addiction of social media are correlated with depression, anxiety and psychological distress (Keles, et al., 2020). In particular, prior researches investigated different results of differences and similarities between online and

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offline civic participation among young people and citizens with different research hypotheses and research settings (e.g. Chen, et al., 2016; Cho, 2020; Gibson & Cantijoch, 2013; Hirzalla & van Zoonen, 2011; Jugert et al., 2013; Machackova & Šerek, 2017; Oser, et al., 2013; Šerek & Machackova, 2014; Vissers & Stolle, 2014). While there has been a question of disengagement of young people (Fahmy, 2003; Farthing, 2010; Stoker, 2011), online participation and social media were also found to be conducive for possibilities of education and civic engagement among students (Burbidge, 2014), for example, online game networks provide new ideas on how to arrange online education in way that the young adults could find motivating and meaningful (Kuukka, et al., 2019). Towards anyone interested in youth studies, within a time of internet political activism (Choi, et al., 2017), studying more about the relationship between online and offline (or real-life) participation of young people is necessary. If we can confirm a relationship between online and offline civic participation through a questionnaire study here, then other emergent social and education questions and possible policies can be followed suit.

In Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of China (hereafter referred to as "Hong Kong SAR"), social media made great impact on some big political events, for example, the Occupy and Umbrella Movement (Lee, et al., 2015) in 2014, which was a 79-day social movement demanding for universal suffrage of the top political leader Chief Executive of Hong Kong SAR in protesting against the constitutional framework set by Chinese National People's Congress, and the large scale anti-extradition bill movement in summer of 2019. Lee (et al., 2015) found that the acquisition of political news through social media was positively related to supporting the Occupy and Umbrella Movement in 2014, while adversely with satisfaction and trust of the Chinese government, the Hong Kong SAR government and the Police Force. But a tough attitude has been evident in the Hong Kong SAR government's attitudes towards Hong Kong's young protestors in 2014 Occupy and Umbrella Movement who were labelled as "separatists" (Iyengar, 2016). In summer of 2019, the anti-extradition bill protest rocked the societal, economic and political situations in Hong Kong, and the unrest chaos lasted for over 6 months. A research study conducted by Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) revealed that almost 75% of the protesters who have taken to the streets in Hong Kong SAR have had some higher education and nearly 60% are younger than 30 years old (South China Morning Post, 2019). Also, the Reuters (2020) reported a survey conducted by the Hong Kong Public Opinion Research Institute. It found that 87% of those aged 18 to 29 say they support the protests that began as early as in March 2019 against a now-

scrapped extradition bill. These findings suggest that a high proportion of the protesters are young people and the age group of 18-29 seems to be engaged in this huge social movement actively. This high level of participation by young people have triggered the authors of this study to investigate how young people's online behaviors influence their civic participation in real life in the aftermath of a huge social movement, though the protests have been basically declined after the introduction of a new National Security Law in June 2020. This new security law criminalizes any act of secession, subversion, terrorism, and collusion with foreign and external forces. China said this new security law will make Hong Kong returns to stability. But then what about the attitudes of online and offline civic participation of Hong Kong SAR young people?

The civic participation by Hong Kong SAR young people has caught attention. Cheng (2017) argued that the stagnated economic growth affecting both Western economies and East Asia also take the tolls in Hong Kong SAR, and the common adverse impact associated with it are keenly felt by Hong Kong's younger generations in terms of declines in real incomes, lack of upward social mobility opportunities, and difficulties in acquiring one's own accommodation etc. Hong Kong university students also think that they do not belong to young middle class, and young people frequently change jobs (Cheng, 2017). Lo and Loo (2018) argued that Hong Kong youths embrace post-materialistic values such as supporting the value of mass participation in government decision-making processes, civil liberties, openness and transparency in their workplace and community, environmental protection and sustainable development, etc. But their method is about studying some localists, who are usually more active and vocal in their civic participation for protecting local identity and cultures, thus agreeing with offline participation positively predicted civic identity (Machackova & Šerek, 2017). Lam-Knott (2019) found that contemporary youth activists describe Hong Kong civil society as "uncaring" and lacking in moral commitment towards realising democratic reforms that will facilitate the development of a just society. The emergence of the localism groups after the Occupy and Umbrella movement in 2014, indeed, has been a significant development in the pro-democracy movement (Cheng, 2017). Hong Kong young people's frustration with their socio-economic conditions and governance have prompted them to advocate for youthful defiance by participation in various social movements. Their political identification and participation patterns mean that the deep polarization in the society has been entrenched (Cheng, 2017). Hong Kong SAR teenagers also spend much time on the internet and social media. 97% of the respondents reported that their major purpose of using internet was to

communicate or interact with others (Hong Kong Census and Statistics Department, 2017). Therefore, schools have to take the main responsibility to teach young people about participation in both real world and on the internet in citizenship education.

This research will supplement current youth literature about online and offline participation in the domain of attitude by using validated sub-scales of internet political activism and critical perspective constructed by Choi (et al., 2017) for investigating how online civic participation of a targeted cross sectional of adolescence and young people (aged 15-29) influence their real-life civic participation in Hong Kong SAR of China. While Chiu and Lee (2018) found that there appear to be circumstances that give rise to diversified learning experiences and so senior secondary school education has little bearing on youth political participation, this study shall attempt to investigate the relationship between on-line and off-line participation. Hence, this study not only aims at giving insights into the connections between on-line and real-life civic participation of Hong Kong SAR adolescence and young people (aged 15 - 29) by performing principal component analysis (PCA) and multivariate regression, but then making a claim for implementing digital citizenship education in schools that cater for the emergent needs of helping students to exercise their rights and duties between online and real-life participation in this increasingly digitalized world. The research findings on the factors identified shall also inform future youth policy making on recognizing the links between online and offline participation on factors such as internet political participation, online critical perspective, interest in politics, membership for social and civic participation, offline citizenship self-efficacy, and participation for social change.

Research questions

The main research question are: First, whether Hong Kong's young people tend to engage in online civic participation rather than real-life civic participation? Second, whether their online civic participation are co-related to their real-life civic participation?

Hypothesis

We have two hypotheses in this study. Specifically speaking, the first hypothesis assumes young people tend to engage in online civic participation and online critical expression rather than offline civic participation. Next, the second hypothesis assumes that their online civic participation are

correlated to their real-life civic participation. For example, Quintelier and Vissers (2008) found that forwarding political e-mails was positively correlated with offline political participation.

Literature Review

Definition of Online and Offline Civic Participation

About the central concepts in this study, civic engagement (or participation) is defined by the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) as "individual or collective actions in which people participate to improve the well-being of communities or society in general" (UNICEF, 2020). Traditionally, civic engagement portrays some actions including voting, attending community meetings or functions, contacting public officials, attending protests, signing petitions, or writing articles about one's community (Cho, 2020). On the other hand, digital civic engagement (or online civic participation) by young people refers to "civic engagement activities specifically done by young people and involving digital media of some kind" (Cho, 2020, 7), such as signing petitions about social issues online and post thoughts related to social issues online. Generally, online engagement is more accessible and need fewer resources than offline engagement (Jugert et al., 2013). For instance, joining a protest on the street needs more time and effort than signing a petition online. This paper shall use these definitions to inform the conceptual design of this study.

The Effect of Online Participation on Civic Participation

About the association between online and offline participation, Quintelier and Vissers (2008) found that forwarding political e-mails was positively correlated with offline political participation on a sample of 16-year-old in Belgium. Ekström and Östman (2013) found that online political interaction increased both online and offline participation through conducting panel survey among Swedish youths. Kahne (et al., 2013) collected data from US high school students, and reported that politically driven online participation was associated with greater political action and expression and campaign participation. Chadwick (2006) stated that those active in online civic activities are also active in offline civic activities and vice versa. Raynes-Goldie and Walker (2008) discovered that civic online participation is the catalyst of offline civic participation (Raynes-Goldie & Walker 2008). Machackova and Šerek (2017) found that online participation caused

raised challenging attitudes towards authorities. A recent research report conducted by UNICEF claimed that young people who participated in online participatory politics tend to engage in offline political participation, like voting (Cho, 2020). Hence, Jansen (2011) argued that student-centered pedagogy which includes practicing social and cultural competencies while engaging in the use of participatory online tools and digital resources should be offered to students so as to engage them in civic life effectively (Jansen, 2011, 38).

In Hong Kong's socio-political context, university students think that they do not belong to young middle class and they want social mobility (Cheng, 2017). However, Adorjan and Yau (2015) found that Hong Kong young people use social media to mobilize resistance and demonstration against a proposal of national education curriculum in schools and claims-making in cyberspace impacts the social problems process. Social media, forums on the Internet, and social application have greatly increased the ways of civic engagement. Centre for Youth Studies (2017) examined the relationship between online and offline political engagement among youths (15–29-year-old). Centre for Youth Studies (2017) observed obvious mean difference between posting or sharing political or public affairs information or comment online (M=1.06, out of 0 to 3) and taking part in an offline march or demonstration (M=0.36, out of 0 to 3). It concluded that Hong Kong young people were more active in online political participation than offline political participation, and that may due to only a few youths transformed their online political expression into offline social action. Chen (et al., 2016) found that sharing political information online predicted offline civic and political participation in Hong Kong. Literature review found limited related literatures for Hong Kong context. Therefore, this study fills the gap by investigating the relationship between online and offline civic participation among adolescence and young people (aged 15-29). More importantly, the process of data collection of this study was from July to October 2020, which was after the notable anti-extradition movement started from mid-2019. Therefore, this work is an update of literature after the recent anti-extradition movement.

Methods

Research Design

This study adopts cross-sectional research strategy to collect data in one single time, with representatives taken from a varied population to get a picture of the whole. Some plausible generalizations can be projected to the target population. Snowball sampling (Goodman, 1961) in

quantitative research was utilized in this study because it is effective at reaching the target group by utilizing relationships and connections. Pilot testing of questionnaires were done among twenty randomly sampled Hong Kong youths and young people (aged 15-29) and these samples were not used again for the formal study. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was 0.94, which is above the commonly recommended value of 0.6. A specific group of samples (i.e., locally born Hong Kong adolescence and youth aged 15-29) is required for this study about Hong Kong's young people, so snowball sampling is a cost-effective and convenient sampling methods for us to approach the target groups of adolescence and youth by online questionnaire, instead of using random sampling which would cost much efforts to locate the specific groups of samples. The project team members asked their professional connections, private networks, colleagues, previous and current students to fill in an online questionnaire, thus forming a wide coverage of target age groups (aged 15-29). The online questionnaire can be filled in either by computer or any digital devices. After filling in the online questionnaire, the respondents were asked to assist researchers in identifying other potential subjects and recruit additional research participants.

Sample

Finally, 1,222 valid online responses were received and recorded after an extensive and purposive sampling efforts by the personal invitations of authors from July to October 2020, which was after the die down of anti-extradition bill movement in 2019. Since this study focuses on Hong Kong adolescence and young people, among those 165 (14%) responses indicate over 30-year-old or/and non-local were excluded from further analysis. Therefore, by subtracting 165 from 1,222 responses, 1,057 local young people in the age groups of 15-19 years old, 20-24 years old, and 25-29 years old were selected and further analyzed (see Table 1). Among them, 280 of them (27%) were 15–19-year-old, 453 of them (43%) were 20–24-year-old, 324 of them (31%) were 25–29-year-old. 670 (63%) respondents were students, 163 (15%) respondents were professional, 85 (8%) were executive-level worker, 40 (4%) were paraprofessional, 28 (3%) were customer service and salespersons, 23 (2%) were teacher. Gender was roughly equal (55% female vs 45% male, contrasted with 838 males per 1,000 females in 2019 census) and representing the overall Hong Kong population. Given that the sheer majority of those under 18-year-old would be studying in Hong Kong secondary schools, and those who are eligible for post-secondary education (about 18 to 22 years old) can be amounted to about one-fifth of Hong Kong population, thus this obtained

sample with 63% (n=670) come from students can, hopefully, characterize majority of adolescence and young people in Hong Kong SAR of China.

Table 1

Questionnaire respondents in this study

Age group	Relative percentage in overall Hong Kong population (last whole territory census in 2015)	Original calculation of expected number of respondents for sampling (out of 1,000 using relative percentage)	Successfully obtained number by purposive sampling in this research study
15 – 19 years old	5%	275	280
20 – 24 years old	6.2%	340	453
25 – 29 years old	7%	385	324
Total	18.2%	1,000	1,057 (students: 670 (63%); professional: 163 (15%); executive-level worker: 85 (8%); paraprofessional: 40 (4%); customer service and salespersons: 28 (3%); teachers: 23 (2%))

Data Collection Tools

The online questionnaire instrument collected data on the participants' digital citizenship and their civic engagement in real life. It was developed on the validated sub-scales of internet political activism and critical perspective constructed by Choi (et al., 2017) in their digital citizenship scale, and those of citizenship self-efficacy, interest in politics, civic participation in community, and social and civic participation scales developed by Cheung (et al., 2018) in their civic participation scale of a Chinese version of ICCS questionnaire which was originally developed by the International Civic and Citizenship Study 2009 (ICCS 2009) (Schulz et al., 2010).

The questionnaire comprised of 37 questions that were designed to provide research participants a chance to describe their online civic participation (Part II, 16 questions) and real-life civic engagement (Part III, 21 questions). Responses were on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 = "never", 2 = "seldom", 3 = "sometimes", 4 = "often", 5 = "always" for Q1-Q9 and Q17-Q26, and 1 = "strongly disagree", 2 = "disagree", 3 = "neutral", 4 = "agree", 5 = "strongly agree" for Q10-Q16 and Q27-Q37. The instrument required participants to reveal their perceptions of their online civic engagement as digital citizens and their civic participation in reality.

A principal component analysis (PCA) was conducted on the 37 items with oblique rotation (Promax). Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was 0.94. Bartlett's test of

sphericity, $X^2(666)=20484.613$, $p<0.001$, indicated that correlations between items were sufficiently large for PCA.

Date Collection

The process of data collection of this study was from July to October 2020. Research ethics approval has been obtained from the Education University of Hong Kong (Ref. no. 2020-2021-0198). The project team members asked their professional connections, private networks, colleagues, previous and current students who are within the youth and young people (15 to 29 years old) to fill in an online questionnaire.

In general, completing each questionnaire by the respondent took approximately 20 minutes. The participants were fully informed about the aims, objectives, and procedures of this research. The research team processed the personal information of participants and kept it confidential in accordance with the relevant provisions of the "Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance" in Hong Kong SAR. There were written information to tell the participants that they can withdraw from this research at any time. They can also request a copy of the research instrument when they have any doubt.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using IBM SPSS statistics 26. PCA was conducted and six components were retained. After that, multivariate regressions were conducted to analyze the correlation of the six components. Finally, hypotheses were supported or rejected based on the inferential statistical analysis.

Findings

Respondents were asked about their online and offline civic participation and/or behaviors. An initial analysis of using PCA was conducted to get eigenvalues for each component in the data. Six components had eigenvalues over Kaiser's criterion of 1 and in combination explained 61% of the variance. Therefore, six components were retained for further analysis. Factor 1 represents internet political activism, with 8 items and excellent reliability ($\alpha=0.9$). Factor 2 represents online critical perspective, with 6 items and high reliability ($\alpha=0.86$), Factor 3 represents interest in politics, with 6 items and high reliability ($\alpha=0.84$). Factor 4 represents social and civic participation, with 6 items and excellent reliability ($\alpha=0.91$). Factor 5 represents offline citizenship self-efficacy, with 5 items and high reliability ($\alpha=0.8$). Factor 6 represents participation for social

change, with 6 items and high reliability (α=0.82). The factors' items and loadings are listed (see Table 2). The correlations between factors ranged from 0.192 to 0.635 (see Table 3).

An unexpected output was found in PCA. We expected Factor 6 (active participation for social change) includes items related to offline civic participation. However, two items related to online civic participation were unexpectedly categorized into Factor 6, including: I contact government officials about an issue that is important to me via online methods; and I work or volunteer for a political party or candidate via online methods. It might be reasonable to include the two items in Factor 6 because these two items describe a relatively more direct action for social change (i.e. either contacting government officials or joining a political party) than other items related to online civic participation in Factor 1 and Factor 2. As mixing of items related to online and offline civic participation in Factor 6, it was named as active participation for social change.

Table 2

Mean, standard deviation and loadings of six factors

	M	SD	Loadings	α
Factor 1: Internet Political Activism				0.9
P1 Post thoughts related to social issues online	3.26	1.22	0.88	
P2 Express opinion online to challenge the status quo with regard to social issues	2.91	1.27	0.84	
P3 Sign petitions about social issues online	3.59	1.30	0.71	
P4 Belong to online groups that are involved in social issues	2.69	1.35	0.69	
P5 Organize petitions about social issues online	2.36	1.28	0.69	
P6 Work with others online to solve local issues	3.03	1.12	0.64	
P7 Use the internet in order to participate in social movement	3.25	1.17	0.58	
P8 Attend political meetings or public forums on local issues via online internet	2.87	1.18	0.65	
Factor 2: Online Critical Perspective				0.86
P9 I think online participation is an effective way to engage with political or social issues	3.42	0.95	0.84	
P10 I think online participation is an effective way to make a change	3.32	1.00	0.75	
P11 I think online participation promotes offline engagement	3.71	0.96	0.7	
P12 I am more socially engaged when I am online than offline	3.39	1.07	0.59	
P13 I think I am given to rethink my beliefs regarding a particular issue when I use internet	3.82	0.88	0.58	
P14 I think the internet reflects the biases and dominate present in offline power structures	3.06	1.07	0.50	
Factor 3: Interest in Politics				0.84
P15 I am interested in social issues of the country	3.42	1.11	0.94	
P16 I am interested in political issues of the country	3.38	1.12	0.94	
P17 I am interested in international politics	3.50	1.05	0.8	
P18 I am interested in local political issues	3.80	1.00	0.56	
P19 I am interested in local social issues	3.98	0.92	0.50	
P20 I am interested in political issues in my community	3.61	1.03	0.45	

Factor 4: Membership and Interest for Social and Civic Participation				0.91
P21 I have joined/ hope to join a voluntary organization to work for the community	2.96	1.20	0.89	
P22 I have joined/ hope to join an environmental organization	2.60	1.18	0.82	
P23 I have joined/ hope to join an organization which rises funding for the society	2.56	1.15	0.77	
P24 I have joined/ hope to join in a group of young people campaigning for an issue	2.95	1.22	0.65	
P25 I use volunteer time to help people in the local community	2.92	1.12	0.54	
P26 I am interested in environment issues	3.68	0.98	0.51	
Factor 5: Offline Citizenship Self-efficacy				0.8
P27 I discuss a newspaper article about social issues with others	3.44	1.10	0.89	
P28 I argue my point of view about a controversial social issue	3.66	1.00	0.88	
P29 I talk to others about my views on a social issue	3.70	0.90	0.79	
P30 I speak in front of others about a social issue	3.51	1.04	0.78	
P31 I follow a TV program which debate controversial issues	2.98	1.25	0.39	
Factor 6: Active Participation for Social Change				0.82
P32 I call to radio programs to give my view on a social issue	1.42	0.85	0.84	
P33 I contribute to a discussion forum about social issues.	1.87	1.12	0.72	
P34 I join an organization for a social cause	1.81	1.12	0.7	
P35 I organize a group of people in order to achieve changes in the society	1.76	1.05	0.62	
P36 I contact government officials about an issue that is important to me via online methods	1.66	0.96	0.58	
P37 I work or volunteer for a political party or candidate via online methods	1.47	0.87	0.44	

Table 3

Correlation among the factors

Component	1	2	3	4	5
1					
2	.635				
3	.436	.281			
4	.515	.598	.192		
5	.469	.376	.197	.321	
6	.323	.300	.335	.325	.220

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Promax with Kaiser Normalization.

Civic participation limited to online

In answering the first hypothesis, further analysis on Table 2 above, however, reveals that relatively low means are observed in six items of Factor 6 (active participation for social change) (ranging from 1.42 to 1.87). Comparatively, the items of Factor 1 (internet political activism) and Factor 2 (online critical perspective) have relatively high means, ranging from 2.36 to 3.82. As explained, responses are on a five Likert-type scale, ranging from 1="never"/"strongly disagree"

to 5="always"/"strongly agree". Statistically, for items in Factor 6, respondents tend to choose "never" or "seldom", while for items in Factor 1 and Factor 2, respondents tend to select "sometimes" or "often". It seems that Hong Kong young people do not tend to actively participate for social change (Factor 6) in real-life now, for example, making a call to radio or something similar to give their views on a social issue, work or volunteer for a political party or candidate, and contact government officials about an issue that is important. Rather, they tend to express their political and critical perspective online only (Factor 1 and 2).

The obvious difference in mean scores may indicate that only a small proportion of young people transformed their discontent or online critical expression into offline civic participation (Centre for Youth Studies, 2017). It may also reflect that Hong Kong's young people have low self-efficacy (Bandura, 1982) and feel powerless on participation for social change, which bears some similarities as those studies which find that young people profess a commitment to the political process, though they consider that there are relatively few opportunities available for them to intervene effectively in formal political life (Henn & Foard, 2013). Young people may feel that their knowledge and ability cannot influence the system and could not recognize the government as representative of their opinions (Hu, 2016), which is also the definition of low political efficacy. This could be an alarm for any policy makers. In fact, Hong Kong's young people started radical protest in the huge anti-extradition movement since mid-2019, but it seems to be subdued since early 2020 after the pandemic outbreak. Facing the iron-fist approach by the government, Hong Kong's young people may feel that their active civic engagement cannot influence the system and so they started to calm down or rethink or even give up. Or maybe, it is just because online engagement is more convenient and accessible than offline engagement (Jugert et al., 2013), and so young people try to express their thought through online methods. The finding is consistent with another Hong Kong study from CUHK (Centre for Youth Studies, 2017) which claimed that youth participated in political activities more actively online than offline. Similar to the limitation of CUHK research, further qualitative research is needed to explore the reason pertaining to why youth are active in online civic engagement but not active in offline civic participation after the anti-extradition movement in 2019, however. Such sense of self-efficacy and powerlessness could be a concern for policymakers in Hong Kong, since the future development of Hong Kong SAR under "One Country, Two Systems" of China relies upon the positive online and offline participation of Hong Kong young people.

As participants tend to engage in online civic participation and online critical expression, rather than offline civic participation, the first null hypothesis is rejected.

Positive correlations between online and offline civic participation

In answering second hypothesis, Table 3 above reports the correlation among the components. As expected, Factor 1 (internet political activism) and Factor 2 (online critical perspective) are relatively strongly correlated with one another, since both of them are related to online civic participation and discussion. Furthermore, this study finds that all components are positively correlated with each other, ranging from 0.197 to 0.591. Therefore, an important finding is a moderate positive correlation could be found between online and offline civic participation. This result is consistent with some previous studies which found the correlation between youth's offline and online civic participation (e.g., Chadwick, 2006; Calenda & Mosca, 2007; Hirzalla & van Zoonen, 2011; Cho, 2020). Thus, we confirm our second hypothesis.

Next, a multivariate regression in general linear model is conducted with two covariates and one dependent variable (see Table 4) for further analyses. The covariates are Factor 1 (internet political activism) and Factor 2 (online critical perspective). The dependent variable is Factor 3 (interest in politics). Table 4 shows the tests of between-subjects effects to see the results of two separate univariate ANOVAs. It shows that Factor 1 has a statistical significant effect on Factor 3, with $F(1, 970) = 133.162$; $P<0.001$; partial $\eta^2 = 0.121$. On the other hand, an insignificant interaction is observed between Factor 2 and Factor 3, with $F(1, 970) = 0.034$; $p>0.5$).

Table 4

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: Factor 3

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	184.658[a]	2	92.329	113.089	.000	.184
Intercept	.000	1	.000	.000	1.000	.000
Factor 1	108.087	1	108.087	133.162	.000	.121
Factor 2	.027	1	.027	.0034	.904	.000
Error	787.342	970	.812			
Total	972.000	973				
Corrected Total	972.000	972				

a. R Squared = .190 (Adjusted R Squared = .188)

Table 5 shows a multivariate regression in general linear model with two covariates and one dependent variable. The covariates are Factor 1 (internet political activism) and Factor 2 (online critical perspective). The dependent variable is Factor 4 (social and civic participation). Table 5 reveals that Factor 1 has a significant effect on Factor 4, with F(1, 970) =48.244; P<0.001; partial η^2 =0.047. Also, Factor 2 has a significant effect on Factor 4, with F(1, 970) =196.38 ; P<0.001; partial η^2 =0.168.

Table 5

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: Factor 4

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	377.672[a]	2	188.836	308.198	.000	.389
Intercept	.000	1	.000	.000	1.000	.000
Factor 1	29.560	1	29.560	48.244	.000	.047
Factor 2	120.324	1	120.324	196.380	.000	.168
Error	594.328	970	.613			
Total	972.000	973				
Corrected Total	972.000	972				

a. R Squared = .389 (Adjusted R Squared = .387)

A multivariate regression in general linear model with two covariates and one dependent variable, as can be seen in Table 6. The covariates are Factor 1(internet political activism) and Factor 2(online critical perspective). The dependent variable is Factor 5 (offline citizenship self-efficacy). Table 6 finds that Factor 1 has a significant effect on Factor 5, with F(1, 970) =112.001 ; P<0.001; partial η^2 =0.104. Also, Factor 2 has a significant effect on Factor 5, with F(1, 970) =13.000 ; P<0.001; partial η^2 =0.013.

Table 6

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: Factor 5

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	223.931[a]	2	111.966	145.183	.000	.230
Intercept	.000	1	.000	.000	1.000	.000
Factor 1	86.375	1	86.375	112.001	.000	.104
Factor 2	10.026	1	10.026	13.000	.000	.013

Error	748.069	970	.771
Total	972.000	973	
Corrected Total	972.000	972	

a. R Squared = .230 (Adjusted R Squared = .229)

Lastly, Table 7 shows another multivariate regression in general linear model with two covariates and one dependent variable. The covariates are Factor 1(internet political activism) and Factor 2 (online critical perspective). The dependent variable is Factor 6 (participation for social change). Table 7 indicates that Factor 1 has a significant effect on Factor 6, with $F(1, 970) = 32.569$; $P<0.001$; partial $\eta^2 = 0.032$. On the other hand, Factor 2 also has a significant effect on Factor 5, with $F(1, 970) = 16.519$; $P<0.001$; partial $\eta^2 = 0.017$.

Table 7

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: Factor 6

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	116.022[a]	2	58.011	65.738	.000	.119
Intercept	.000	1	.000	.000	1.000	.000
Factor 1	28.741	1	28.741	32.569	.000	.032
Factor 2	14.578	1	14.578	16.519	.000	.017
Error	855.978	970	.882			
Total	972.000	973				
Corrected Total	972.000	972				

a. R Squared = .119 (Adjusted R Squared = .118)

In summary, multivariate regression found that Factor 1 (internet political activism) has significant effect on Factor 3 (interest in politics), Factor 4 (social and civic participation), Factor 5 (offline citizenship self-efficacy), and Factor 6 (participation for social change). Factor 2 (online critical perspective) has significant effect on Factor 4, Factor 5, and Factor 6, but insignificant effect on Factor 3. These results indicate that online civic participation exhibits a strong positive relationship with offline civic engagement. Although we are unable to confirm a causal relationship through this cross-sectional study, the findings are overall consistent with the literature which shows a possibility of causality, such as Raynes-Goldie and Walker (2008) found that online civic engagement is the facilitator of offline civic engagement, and the research conducted by UNICEF which claim that young people who participated in online participatory politics tend to engage in offline political participation (Cho, 2020). A model on the relationships of all factors in this study

has been created according to the statistical results (see Figure 1). Therefore, a strong support is observed for the second alternative hypothesis, and the second null hypothesis is rejected.

Another interesting observation is that, after using cross-tab and correlations, male respondents tend to show more interest in political (Q27, Q28) and social issues (Q26), and discussing about society problems online (Q2, Q6) than the female respondents. Male respondents tend to reply "always" on all these items. This finding may tell something about gender difference but we are not making any generalizing about gender here.

Structural Model Predicting Relationship between online and offline civic participation

The findings in this study shall supplement online participation predicted increased challenging attitudes towards social authorities (Machackova & Šerek, 2017). This finding may also suggest that Hong Kong's young people can be different from those youth generations who were often characterized as apathetic or even as anti-political, with neither aptitude nor inclination for participating in any form of real-life collective social endeavor (Fahmy, 2003; Russell, 2004; Stoker, 2006, 2011; Hay, 2007; Farthing, 2010).

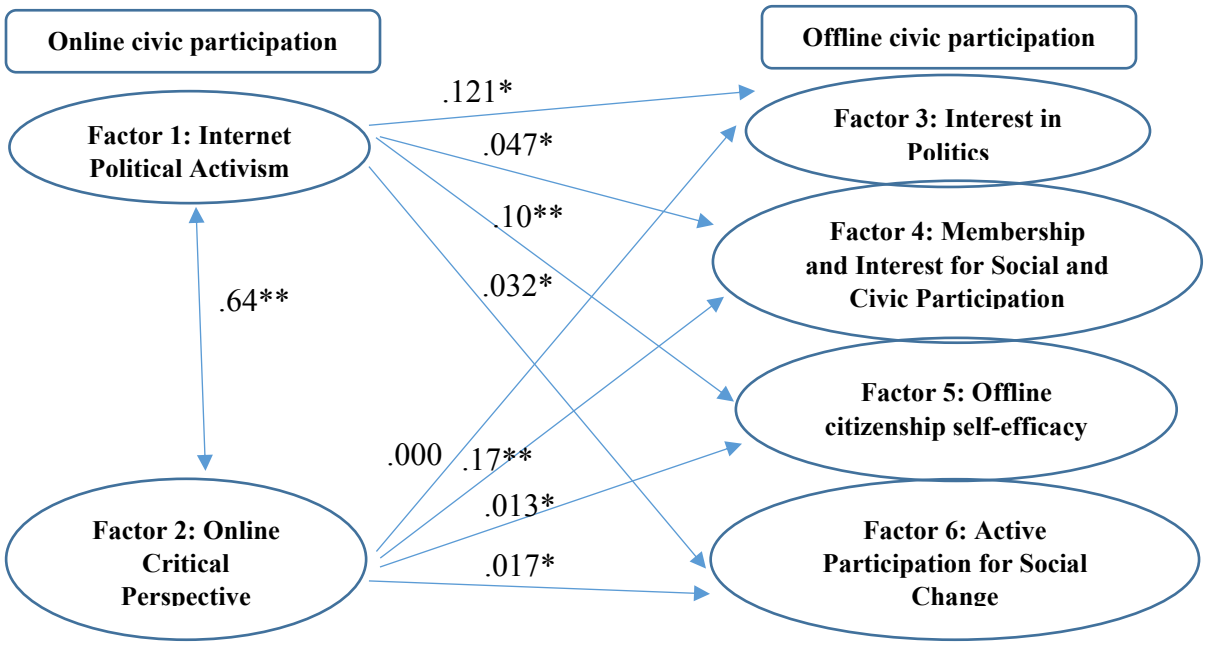

Figure 1 Structural Model Predicting Relationship between online and offline civic participation (*p<0.05, **p<0.01)

Discussion: digital citizenship education for young people

Overall speaking, this study found that online civic participation has a possible substantial effect on offline civic participation among Hong Kong's young people, and thus we are supplementing on the finding of distinct submodes of e-participation, comparable to those occurring offline, can be identified when conceptualizing and measuring participation in the age of the internet (Gibson & Cantijoch, 2013). Hong Kong students are found to relate online critical perspective such as rethinking their beliefs regarding a particular issue when they use internet (Factor 2) and offline political activism such as talking or arguing about their points of views on a controversial social issue (Factor 5). Yet, it should be noted that when it comes to participation for social change, Hong Kong young people's showed lower intention, as we can observed in all items of Factor 6. Our finding also agree that social media enhance among youths their citizenship engagement, knowledge, and participation (Davies et al., 2014), and confirming online environment may be fostering a new social-media-based type of expressive political behaviour (Gibson & Cantijoch, 2013). Yet, it should bear in mind that Wineburg (et al., 2016) found more than 80% of youths from middle schools failed to judge the credibility of the news they read. Based on these findings, youths may be more vulnerable to fake news.

While this study points out a plausible positive relationship between online and offline civic participation, the findings (e.g. Factor 1 (internet political activism) has significant effect on Factor 3 (interest in politics), Factor 4 (social and civic participation), Factor 5 (offline citizenship self-efficacy), and Factor 6 (participation for social change) suggest an urgent need for the Hong Kong SAR government to make much effort on promoting digital citizenship (Kim & Choi, 2018) so as to develop young people's critical thinking and media literacy to judge the information and fake news online, and learn about the norms of appropriate and responsible behaviors with regard to technology use (Douglas, 2014; Ribble, 2015), especially since Hong Kong young people participate in various social movements, and thus developing their political identification and participation patterns (Cheng, 2017). Of course, a resultant effect of introducing a new national security law in 2020 has made this city returned to a quiet place after the persistent social protests against introducing the controversial bill in 2019. Therefore, how to engage Hong Kong youths in a positive manner of making social change requires Hong Kong SAR government's careful considerations.

Although the Hong Kong SAR government has produced a series of public advertisement to alert youngsters to "check facts to keep fake news in check" through radio, TV, and leaflets, etc., but in education, the government should also lead the curriculum reform. "A student-centered pedagogy which includes practicing social and cultural competencies while engaging in the use of participatory online tools and digital resources" should be offered to students so as to engage them in civic and political life and participate effectively (Jansen, 2011, 38). Digital citizenship education could be one of the future important directions for Hong Kong schools by teaching online rights, responsibilities, and participation in this increasingly globalized and digitalized world.

In a report of Council of European, it also suggested that recent events related to the radicalization of young people on social media, the rise of fake news and hate speech, as well as the crisis of "post-truth" politics have reinforced the need to take decisive steps towards the development of Digital Citizenship Education (Frau-Meigs et al., 2017). The Council of Europe also operated a project - Digital Citizenship Education Project – to support EU members in developing DCE policies and curriculum so as to educate children and let them acquire the competences for learning and active participation in digital society (Digital Citizenship Education Project, 2018). Law (et al., 2018) argue for re-examination of the concept of citizenship in a world facing pervasive impacts of technology and they argue in terms of the conceptualization of digital citizenship in education, what constitutes a digital citizenship curriculum, and the challenges in its implementation. Similarly, in Hong Kong, radicalization of young people on social media, the rise of fake news and hate speech based on politics had been observed frequently during the anti-extradition movement in late 2019. Many youngsters also face bullying and incitements online, where teachers and parents may not be able to notice and monitor easily. Digital citizenship education programs thus "seek to impart values and concepts that enable children and youth to critically evaluate the information they are given by the people wishing to radicalize them" (UNESCO, 2016, 14). This media literacy knowledge is particularly crucial for students to learn in this internet era because there is too many fake news throughout the internet, and young people may not be able to recognize all of them.

Limitations

The significance for adolescence and youth studies is that we collected a significant number of responses from Hong Kong youths and young people (aged 15-29), and the timing of the study

was just after the wreaking havoc of 2019 anti-extradition movement in Hong Kong. This paper thus sheds light on understanding how would youth respond to issues, problems, and policies throughout the world. During the high tide of 2019 anti-extradition bill movement, what Hong Kong youths did bear a resemblance to what Quintelier and Vissers (2008) found that forwarding political e-mails was positively correlated with offline political participation. Our study also confirmed Hong Kong adolescence and youth view that online engagement is more accessible and need fewer resources than offline engagement (Jugert et al., 2013). Therefore, this study can possibly offer an update on online and offline youth participation among new generations in the world nowadays. Youth policy and education development on how to help students discern information, online fake news and fabricated stories, understand more about different forms of legal online activism, exercise proper application of critical perspectives, and to develop a healthy linkage between online and offline participation should be considered. However, the limitation of this study is lack of qualitative research as supplementary evidence for exploring why online and offline civic engagement are intertwined from the narratives of youth and young people. The next step shall be contacting the respondents of this study and conducting in-depth interviews with them to explore more subtle descriptions and explanations on the relationships between their online and offline civic engagement. Gender may also be explored on their differences towards online and offline participation on nature and type by conducting interviews, if any. How does online participation affect claims-making in the real life, and how does claims-making in the real-life affect larger online participation patterns? However, further research may possibly face delays in arranging any face-to-face interview because of the persistent adverse impacts of the pandemic in 2021.

Conclusion

This study utilized PCA to categorize 37 items into 6 factors. It found that internet political activism and online critical perspective among Hong Kong SAR young people have a statistically significant effect on their interest in politics, interest for social and civic participation, offline citizenship self-efficacy, and active participation for social change. Generally speaking, this study confirmed online civic participation has an effect on offline civic participation, therefore supporting the correlation between youth's offline and online civic participation. Moreover, Hong Kong youth are more actively engaging in online civic participation than participating in real-life for social change substantially, and the time of this investigation was in the middle of 2020, which

was after the large scale 2019 protests. They adopt digital civic engagement (or online civic participation) by engaging themselves in digital media of some kind. But the finding also highlights that Hong Kong youth and young people have low self-efficacy and feeling of powerless on participation for social change after the social movements in 2019. Our data reveals that this generation's engagement with real-life politics is complex and nuanced. The results are overall consistent with international literature in the western (e.g., Cho, 2020; Centre for Youth Studies, 2017; Kahne et al., 2013; Henn & Foard, 2014) and so it adds on the literature of online and offline civic participation from an East Asian society of Hong Kong context. The result is particularly illustrative because we found that politically driven online participation was associated with greater political action, expression and campaign participation in real-life, but they could be hampered in real-life of making social changes because of with plausible reasons of low self-efficacy and feeling of powerless. We recommend digital citizenship education to be designed and implemented in schools so that the online and social media can also be conducive for possibilities of education and civic engagement among students.

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